

Every Child Learning Every Day



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An early childhood newsletter from the State Department of Education

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READY TO LEARN

Books for the holiday

By Dr. Stan Steiner

Thanksgiving is one holiday that calls for reflection on the past year. A few good books to help your preschoolers share some thankful moments follow:

"Autumn Walk," by Ann Burg, illustrated by Kelly Asbury, 2003, HarperCollins. Many wonderful changes in nature take place during the fall season. A great book to read before or after your walk in the great outdoors.

"Biscuit is Thankful," by Alyssa Satin Capucilli, illustrated by Pat Schories, 2003, HarperCollins. Biscuit the puppy has a lot to be thankful for every day. Audiences are likely to see many similarities to their loving environment.

"Thanksgiving Is Here!," by Diane Goode, 2003, HarperCollins. There is nothing like Thanksgiving at Grandma and Grandpa's house. The day starts early for the two of them, but the time together with family is a sight to behold in this delightful rendition of this yearly event.

"Spot's Thanksgiving," by Eric Hill, 2003, Putnam. Spot makes a special pumpkin pie for his grandparents on Thanksgiving. Of course the celebration was the best ever.

Dr. Stan Steiner teaches Children's Literature at Boise State University. Find more book reviews at <http://education.boisestate.edu/ssteine>.



Idaho is becoming a reading state

Dear Reader:

A staff member recently told me that she saw a sign on a small Idaho town's lumber yard that displayed the message: "Read with your child 20 minutes every day."

I am thrilled that signs like that are becoming more and more common across Idaho. They are one of the indicators that we are turning into a "reading state," which means that our communities, their schools, their businesses, and residents recognize and understand the value of reading with children every day.

Part of being a reading state are partnerships: businesses that post messages on signs or bulletin boards; community clubs that provide books for needy children in English and Spanish; groups that fund public service announcements, and even pediatricians that promote family reading habits.

An important longtime partner in



Dr. Marilyn Howard
Superintendent of Public Instruction

our efforts to ensure that every child learns to read well are the libraries across the state.

In addition to summer pro-

grams, designed to help children keep reading during the long break from school, there are other events and activities to "grow" readers.

This month — Family Reading Month — is one of the those times. (See story on the back page).

During this month, many libraries plan special activities to help families get started reading or new ideas for families to try.

I invite you to mark your calendars for Nov. 16-22 for Family Reading Week. Plan a visit to your local library and find out what's new. And to talk with your employer or a local business about helping to spread the word about reading every day with a child.

Marilyn Howard

READY TO LEARN

Science lessons build vocabulary skills

During cooking and science activities, the parent or teacher talks about what he/she is doing, while performing an activity. This is a great opportunity for children to hear new words in a meaningful context.

One science activity you can use is a lesson on mixing primary colors (red, yellow, and blue) to make new colors (orange, green, and purple). The activity is simple: clear plastic cups are filled with water to which drops of food coloring are added. These colors are mixed to make new colors.

Materials: Six clear plastic cups; red, yellow and blue food coloring; one eyedropper for each child.

What to do: Pour water into three clear cups.

Squeeze several drops of food coloring into each cup of water using primary colors (red, yellow, and blue). Stir. Add



enough food coloring to make each color a rich hue. Mix secondary colors by transferring a small amount of

colored water from two of the three cups of colored water. Mix red and yellow water in the first cup, blue and yellow water in the second cup, and red and blue water in the third cup. Water can be poured or it can be transferred using an eyedropper, sponge, or small bulb syringe.

For the purpose of talking about the activity, the adult can demonstrate the first color-mixing tasks. Some more tips on talking while doing the activity:

Use action verbs that describe the processes involved when mixing colors. "First I'll fill these cups. I'll pour water from this pitcher."

Use sequence words that describe the order, such as "first," "second," and "third." "First, I'll begin by filling this cup with water... second, I will add a little food coloring... now the third thing I'm going to do..."

Use quantitative concepts to describe and compare amounts. "One cup has more food coloring than the other cup. I will add some more food coloring so that both cups are the same color."

Read stories about mixing colors to strengthen the ideas addressed though this activity. Suggested titles include: "Little Blue and Little Yellow," by Leo Leoni, "Mouse Paint," by Ellen Stoll Walsh, "Color Dance," by Ann Jonas, and "Color," by Ruth Heller.



RESOURCES

Foundation extends dental program

The Caring Foundation for Children, in affiliation with Regence BlueShield of Idaho, announced in June that it will extend its oral health insurance program for low-income children statewide.

The Caring Foundation for Children provides a complete dental treatment plan at no cost to children whose families cannot afford private dental insurance and do not qualify for any government-sponsored program.

Caring Foundation benefits cover both preventive and restorative care. The Foundation, administered free of charge by Regence BlueShield of Idaho, provides free dental coverage to uninsured children, who are under the age of 19, receive no government assistance such as Medicaid, and whose family income is at 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Each child on the Caring Foundation is eligible to receive a complete dental treatment plan up to \$1,000 in a calendar year.

The program was created in response to a growing statewide community health crisis. The American Academy of Pediatrics estimates that 55,000 to 75,000 children in Idaho are medically uninsured. The Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health in America shows that for each child without medical insurance there are at least 2.6 children without dental insurance.

Since the program began in Idaho, the company has served 173 children with the help of tax-deductible contributions from individuals and groups.

For more information call 1 (888) 589-5437 or visit www.caringfoundationforchildren.org

NUTRITION

Older kids should drink lower fat milk

Milk is an important part of a nutritious diet especially for young children. With many milk choices available, no fat, skim, 2 percent etc, it can be difficult to know which is the best option to serve children.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Child Nutrition programs offer this information from its "Nibbles" newsletter:

Children younger than 2



For children under 2 years, provide whole milk after breast milk or formula. Babies and toddlers need the fat from whole milk to grow properly.

2 and older

Starting at age 2, children can drink low-fat milk. It's a good habit for entire families to learn.

Drinking low-fat milk is one way to reduce saturated fat in the diet, and get children in the habit of drinking nutritious liquids to quench their thirst instead of juices or sodas.

Below are some tips to transition from whole to lower-fat options

Change slowly to low-fat milk;

Switch first from whole to 2% milk. When your child gets used to the flavor, try low-fat milk.

Try chocolate-low fat milk. The flavor is about the same as in higher fat chocolate milk.

Offer low-fat milk on cereal and in smoothies. The child probably won't notice.

Milk contains several important nutrients including:

Calcium and vitamin D for a child's growing bones and teeth. These same nutrients help adult bones stay healthy.

Protein for building a growing body. It also keeps your body in good repair.

Vitamin A for healthy eyes and skin.

READY TO LEARN

Simple activities help build math foundation

The Thanksgiving holiday is a great opportunity to use some simple activities to teach or reinforce early math skills. Try these seasonal suggestions from www.123child.com:

Turkey Feather Game: Find a picture of a turkey that you like. Make six copies of it. Cut out the bodies of the turkeys (so you just have to add the feathers to make the turkey complete). Write the number "one" on the first turkey, two on another, repeat with the numbers three through six. Provide

the children with twenty one feather shapes, cut from construction paper or store bought craft feathers. Ask the children to place the appropriate number of feathers on each turkey. One feather on the turkey with the number one on it ... and so on.

Feather Sorting: Cut out several different feather shapes from construction paper or provide the children with store bought craft feathers (can be used the the above activity as well). Ask the children to sort the feathers according to color. Ask the children "How many red feathers do you have?" ... and so on.

ACTIVITIES

Idaho's Family Reading Week set for Nov. 16-22

Idaho families are encouraged to make libraries a part of their family memories during Idaho Family Reading Week Nov. 16-22 and throughout the year.

This year's theme is Discover New Trails @ your library. Below are some activities from the Idaho State Library that families may want to try to help teach children about travel and geography.

Emphasize where a story takes place to help kids become aware of settings. Use the following ideas to help:

Find a large copy of a world map. Put pins, stickers or highlight places visited, where rela-

tive live, current events, or book settings.

Talk about where ideas, products, and people come from.

Visit a travel agency and collect travel brochures. Read them and talk about unique places to travel.

Collect stamps. Research or map their origins. Help your child get a pen pal or write letters to relatives or friends in different cities or countries.

Keep maps, atlases and globes around the house. Use them with your child.

Talk about what you like best about being home. What is it like to be away from home? What do you or would you miss the most? If you could travel anywhere in

the world, where would you go?

Make binoculars by stapling two toilet tissue tubes and some yarn together. Explore and talk about what you see together.

Celebrate cultural customs and rituals from your own heritage.

Create a pretend "suitcase" from a file folder or cereal box (cover with paper or fabric). Have kids cut out or draw pictures of items they might need on a trip (toothbrush, clothing, camera, etc.) and pack them in the file folder.

Learn a few common phrases in other languages.

For more ideas visit a local library or www.lili.org.